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Sovetskaya Etnografiya, No 4, 1950.

THE YAZ'VA KOMI PEOPLE OF THE USSR

Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Section, within the boundaries of which the Yaz'va Komis live, consists of six village soviets (Bychinskiy, Verkhneyaz'vinskiy, Timino-Belkovskiy, Talavol'skiy, Antipinskiy, and Van'kovskiy), with 54 populated points in all. Of the 54, only seven are located on the left side of the Yaz'va. These are: Talitsa (also called Yevsina, or Vil'va) derevnya (village), on the Vil'va

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River; Sysoyeva, Abramova, Aksenova, and Nefedova derevni, on the high left bank of the Yaz'va opposite Antipina; and P'yankova and Pud'va derevni, on the Mel' River and its tributary, the Pud'va Stream (rechushka). The remaining 47 populated points make up a compact group of settlements extending for 35-40 kilometers along the Yaz'va and its right tributaries. The distance from one populated point to another ranges from one half kilometer to 5 kilometers.

Almost all of the small area where people live can be seen from Pal'eva derevnya, Bychinskiy Village Soviet. Pal'eva is located on a high hillside on the right bank of the Yaz'va. The edge of the forest recedes here, and from this point on up the river to the village of Antipina kolkhoz fields, broken here and there by wooded areas, stretch out along the hillsides. On the horizon rises Antipina Mountain, where the village of the same name is located. On clear days Cherdyn', with its ancient churches, can be seen from Pal'eva with the naked eye.

The whole Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Section constitutes an island in the middle of the thick forest. Thirty kilometers of woods -- spruce [or fir] (Picea), pine (Pinus) and birch (Betula), aspen (Populus tremula), and rare varieties of cedar (Cedrus) -- lie between it and Krasnovishersk. There are two Russian settlements along these 30 kilometers, Yaborovo and Parma (the latter founded during the Soviet period), while near Krasnovishersk there is a third, Suyankova derevnya.

Konovalova derevnya is the last populated point on the Yaz'va; beyond it there is nothing but virgin forest.

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In their own tongue the Yaz'va Komis call their language "Komi," but when speaking Russian they refer to it as "Permyak." They usually call themselves "Permyaks," not "Komis," although when possible they try to avoid the issue altogether, as the term "Permyak" carries a somewhat derogatory connotation. The neighboring Russian population calls them "Permyaks."

Geographical proximity and close contact with the Russian population has had a great influence on the language of the Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Komis. Some speak Russian exclusively, others Komi exclusively, while in between there are a number of bilingual groups. Roughly, the whole population of the Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Section can be divided into four linguistic groups:

1. People using Russian exclusively. These people do not understand Komi at all. This group includes Kislovo, Mokhovo, and Ivachino derevni, Bychinskiy Village Soviet, and comprises 62 households with a population of about 280. These people are part of Russian, part of Yaz-va Komi descent.

2. People using predominantly Russian. Russian is spoken in the home. The majority of the adult population understands Komi, and some speak it, but the children for the most part, do not know the language at all. This group may be termed bilingual Russians. For the most part the people are Yaz'va Komis who have come to speak Russian, but some are Russians who have settled there and learned Komi as a second language. This group includes Nizhnyaya and Verkhnyaya Bychina, Gil'eva, Paleva, Churilki, and Sredneye Pole derevni (i.e., all of Bychinskiy Village Soviet except the above-mentioned Russian derevni), comprising 120 households with a population of about 540; and Zarechka, Gortsa, and Kichigina derevni and Verkhneyaz'va selo (village), Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Village Soviet, comprising 63 households with a population of about 280.

3. People using Russian in the home, but where the adult population is bilingual. The adults are perfectly fluent in both Komi and Russian, and the children understand Komi, though they do not speak it. These people are mostly of Komi descent, and the group may be termed bilingual Komis. This group includes Sheremeteva

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(Verkhnyaya and Nizhnyaya) and Dubrovka (Verkhnyaya and Nizhnyaya) derevni, Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Village Soviet, comprising 80 households with a population of about 360; and P'yankova and Pud'va derevni (in these two there is a significant Russian element), comprising 46 households with a population of about 200.

4. People using Komi in the home. These people are Komis, but the overwhelming majority of the adult population knows Russian. This group includes the remaining 36 populated points, comprising 677 households with a population of about 3,040.

Thus, at present in Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Section there are about 3,600 persons who speak the language of the Yaz'va Komis fluently and at the same time are familiar with the local colloquial Russian. This includes about 75 percent of the population of the section. Comparison with statistics from previous surveys indicates that there has been no great change in the Yaz-va Komi population of the area over the last 40 years.

The following table gives a breakdown of the village soviets by populated points and the population of each.

[See table on following page.]

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Linguistic Breakdown

Village Soviet	Total			Russians			Bilingual Russians			Bilingual Komis			Komis		
	Populated points	Households	Population	Populated points	Households	Population	Populated points	Households	Population	Populated points	Households	Population	Populated points	Households	Population
Bychinskiy	9	182	820	3	62	280	6	120	540				1	29	130
Verkhneyaz'vinskiy	8*	172	770				4	63	280	2	80	360	9	144	650
Timino-Bel'kovskiy	9	144	650										12	190	850
Talavol'skiy	12	190	850							2	46	200	7	166	750
Antipinskiy	9	212	950										7	138	660
Van'kovskiy	7	138	660												
Total	54	1,038	4,700	3	62	280	10	183	820	4	126	560	36	667	3,040
Percent of total population			100			6			19			11			64

\* [Sic. The figure given for total populated points in Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Village Soviet is 8, but only 7 populated points are listed in the linguistic breakdown. This makes a total of 54 populated points in the total column, as against a total of 53 in the linguistic breakdown column.]

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